THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Passenger and goods train services already exist between India and Pakistan.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) An agreement between the Government of India and Government of Pakistan to run Samjhouta Express & Goods Train between Attari (India)—Lahore (Pakistan) was reviewed and renewed in January, 2001. For introduction of passenger trains between India and Bangladesh, an agreement was entered in July 2001, but till date the sanction of Bangladesh Government has not been received. As regards containerized traffic between India and Bangladesh, no agreement has been reached between two countries.

Allocation of Outlay for Railway Safety

3498. DR. K. MALAISAMY:
SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the allocation for railway safety for the last three years and how much was spent for safety alone and how much was diverted for other purposes;

(b) the reasons for such diversion in violation of financial discipline;

(c) the vacancies available under safety category for the last three year and what is the percentage shortage of manpower in the category of drivers; and

(d) whether it is a fact that there has been a substantial shortfall in training safety category of staff?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The total gross plan allocation made for planheads relating to safety works, in the last three years has been as under:—

(Rs. in crore)

Year	Budget Grant	Revised Grant	Actual Expenditure
2002-03	5204.72	4920.84	4684.01
2003-04	5234.56	5325.25	5027.09
2004-05(Provisional)	5948.60	6775.34	6465.78

There has been no diversion of funds. However, there has been under-utilisation in 2002-03 (Revised Grant) and in the Actuals. The reason for the under-utilisation has been mainly on account of Road Safety Works-Road Over Bridges/Road Under Bridges where the work is jointly executed by the Railways and State Government. In such works delays occur due to fund constraints with the State Governments, delays in finalisation of approach alignment and acquisition of land by the State Government, difficulties in removing encroachments on approach portion of bridges etc.

(c) Occurrence and filling up of vacancies being a continuous process, a few vacancies are bound to exist at any given point of time. The vacancy position in Safety Categories during the last three years as on 01.11.2003, 01.11.2004 and 01.11.2005 is as under:—

Position as on	Sanctioned strength	Vacancies	%age
01.11.2003	6,14,695	72,552	11.80
01.11.2004	6,31,536	78,564	12.44
01.11.2005	6,41,560	86,211	13.44

In the category of Drivers (including Diesel/Electric Assistants, Shunters and Motormen) there were 9609 vacancies as against the sanctioned strength of 69,417 on all Indian Railways as on 01.11.2005. This works out to about 13.84% of the sanctioned strength in this category.

The number of vacancies in a category is based on the sanctioned strength. The sanctioned strength includes not only the bare requirement for operation but also Rest Givers, Leave Reserve and provision for training etc. In the case of category of Drivers, these additional provisions are upto 30% which take care of gaps, if any, between occurrence and filling up of vacancies. The vacancies are thus within manageable limit and not severe and acute resulting in excessive or severe amount of over hours working for drivers.

(d) There is no substantial shortfall in training safety category staff.